existence, the Prime Minister's part in it became more shadowy. His health soon showed signs of deterioration; and though an anxious public were from time to time assured that there was no reason to anticipate being deprived of his services ('The Prime Minister has so steadily gained in strength and public estimation since he took his great decision to face the country that, if any man can ever be called indispensable to the State, he has won that tide to-day'), many of the responsibilities which ordinarily went with his office devolved upon the Lord President of the Council, Mr. Baldwin. MacDonald had performed an important service in inducing many Labour and non-party voters to support Conservative candidates; but with 471 Conservative members of Parliament, and five years to run before another General Election, his usefulness was largely exhausted. Trade was improving, unemployment decreasing, and revenue coming in well; the Labour Party was no longer formidable, and unlikely to become so again, at any rate in the near future. What purpose, then, was served by having its former leader as Premier, and listening to his meandering speeches, with the obligation of occasionally applauding sentiments which were only tolerable because incomprehensible ?

Someone more substantial was required; still high-minded, still enlightened and with a feeling heart, but whose feet were firmly planted on the earth and who was less prone than Mac-Donald on the slightest provocation to go up and up and up and on and on and on. The right man was available, as he always is. After Lossiemouth came Bewdley; after simple

fisher-folk and a library in which to go 'wandering and roaming and dreaming alone', came pigs and a pipe. MacDonald had made straight the way for Mr. Baldwin.

If Mr. Baldwin had been fortunate enough to hold office during a period of international tranquillity, his premiership would probably have been reckoned among the most successful. For handling a General Strike or deposing a recalcitrant monarch, there has been no one like him. His talent for making mistakes and being inconsistent without diminishing the esteem in which